



H.Res. 1109 – Honoring the memory of Dith Pran by remembering his life's work and continuing to acknowledge and remember the victims of genocides that have taken place around the globe

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 1109 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Albio Sires (D-NJ) on April 15, 2008. The bill was reported out of the Committee on Foreign Affairs where the committee agreed to consider the legislation under suspension of the rules.

H.Res. 1109 is expected to be considered on May 5, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Res. 1109 resolves that the House of Representatives:

- Honors the life and legacy of Mr. Dith for his commitment to raising awareness about the atrocities that took place under the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia;
- Recognizes his courage and his endless pursuit for justice for the victims of the Cambodian genocide and all peoples around the world who have been victims of genocide; and
- Honors the memory of Mr. Dith by remembering his life's work and continuing to acknowledge and remember the victims of genocides that have taken place around the world.

BACKGROUND

Dith Pran was born on September 23, 1942, in Siem Reap, Cambodia. He was a photojournalist and a human rights advocate during the times of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge regime was in power in Cambodia from 1975 to 1979. During that time period the regime sentenced nearly 2,000,000 people to death through work camps, starvation, and execution.

Mr. Dith was responsible for saving the lives of many western photographers and journalists by persuading Khmer Rouge soldiers that they were sympathetic to the Khmer cause. He eventually became good friends with Sydney H. Schanberg of the New York Times. Mr. Schanberg helped Dith's wife and children escape Cambodia, but he was forced to stay behind.

Mr. Dith eventually fled 60 miles to the border of Thailand. Mr. Schanberg flew to meet him and take him to San Francisco to be with his family that had previously escaped.

He became a photographer for the New York Times and began a campaign focused on the tragedies in Cambodia. The 1984 film, "The Killing Fields," was based on the partnership and friendship of Dith Pran and Sydney H. Schanberg.



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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Mr. Dith became a United States resident and a goodwill ambassador. His final accomplishment was working with Senator Charles Robb (D-VA) to pass the Cambodian Genocide Justice Act of 1994 which established the Office of Cambodian Genocide Investigations at the Department of State.

Mr. Dith passed away on March 30, 2008 at the age of 65.

STAFF CONTACT

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